

**Jaguar Conservation Team (JAGCT) Summary Notes**  
Animas High School Library, Animas, New Mexico  
July 28, 2001

Meeting was called to order by Bill Van Pelt, Arizona Game and Fish Department (AGFD) at 10:10 MDT. The meeting location was switched from the Animas Community Center to the High School; the additional time was allowed for participants that may not have been aware of the switch in location.

A. Opening Comments and Ground Rules

Ground rules were the same as previous meetings. Participants were asked to raise their hand to ask a question or state an opinion. Only one person was supposed to speak at a time, with no side conversations, so that each person could be heard and the meeting could move forward. Participants in the Jaguar Working Group (JAGWG; i.e., everyone present at the meeting) were allowed to comment and were encouraged to do so on any issue being discussed at the meeting.

***Handouts Available***

1. Characterizing and Mapping Potential Jaguar Habitat in Arizona - available for Habitat Subcommittee members only
2. Jaguar sightings brochure
3. Summary of Jaguar Curriculum Reviews and Reviewer Comments

B. Agenda Review/Additional Discussion Points

Scotty Johnson (Defenders of Wildlife) requested a review of last month's meeting notes, specifically to ensure that his comments regarding INS participation were included. Upon review, no further action/discussion ensued.

C. Status of Previous Action Items

1. Distribute information on USFWS Applicant Status Criteria- pending.
2. Brochure on reporting jaguar sightings- Copies of the final brochure were distributed, and a request for funding additional printed copies was made. Please check with your affiliated agencies to help defer cost of printing additional copies.
3. Annual JAGCT Activity Report to USFWS- the last report (July 2000 to June 2001) is pending finalization and printing.

D. Task Reports

***Update on Arizona Jaguar Sightings***

Tim Snow (AGFD) has received 3 reports of potential sightings since the January meeting: one was a spotted cat with an 8 inch tail seen in the Phoenix area; one was a spotted cat seen

in a wash in NW Tucson, the size described as between a bobcat and mountain lion; one of a large black cat in the Clay Springs area near Show Low, Arizona. Only the Clay Springs sighting produced any physical evidence (photo). Wildlife Managers from the Arizona Game and Fish Department's Pinetop Regional Office investigated the Clay Springs sighting by taking hunting dogs and a culvert trap to the area. No tracks were observed, and the hounds did not recover any scent. Upon further investigation, a homeowner in the area stated that he had been feeding a large black house cat and this animal may have been the one reported. While talking with the homeowner, the 25-pound black cat showed up and no further action was taken.

#### ***Update on New Mexico Sightings***

Chuck Hayes, New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, reported that no sightings have been investigated in New Mexico since the January meeting.

#### ***Jaguar Sighting Brochure***

Bill Van Pelt distributed copies of the sighting brochure and thanked those individuals that provided comments and assistance. Cost for printing the brochure was limited and resulted in only 500 copies. **Action Item:** Please check with your agency and see if funds may be available to help defer costs for additional copies. Defenders of Wildlife and the U.S. Forest Service expressed that they may be able to contribute.

#### ***Update on Jaguar Depredation Reports***

Jack Childs, Depredation Subcommittee Chair, has not received any reports of potential jaguar kills since the last meeting.

#### ***Jaguar Habitat Identification***

Bill Van Pelt reported that the GIS-based report, *Characterizing and Mapping Potential Jaguar Habitat in Arizona*, has been re-drafted and was available for Habitat Sub-committee member review. The comment period for sub-committee members is extended to the end of August. **Action Item:** Habitat Sub-committee members please provide comment by **September 4, 2001**. Send comments to Tim Snow at 555 N. Greasewood Road, Tucson, Arizona 85745.

The Jaguar Scientific Advisory Group (SAG) was sent copies of the report. Comments received have been favorable, stating that the sub-committee is using the best information available. The SAG does recommend that we clarify, up front, that the information used in development of the report is based on kill-records.

New Mexico Department of Game and Fish is contracting with the University of New Mexico to provide a similar report for New Mexico. Timeline for completion has not been determined.

Carlos Lopez is applying the same approach for information from Mexico. Timeline for completion has not been determined.

Discussion regarding the use of this report followed: This issue continues to be addressed at every meeting, and the concern stems from the designation of "critical habitat". As stated in past meeting notes (January 2000), our exercise is not likely to be used for such purposes, as the USFWS is not and does not foresee pursuing critical habitat designation for jaguars. The purpose of our exercise is merely an attempt to develop a habitat suitability model for the jaguar that is applicable to Arizona. Bill Van Pelt further reviewed that the USFWS should consider our report as a more refined description of jaguar habitat/occurrences in Arizona. Typically, the USFWS bases their Section 7 consultations on the best available information. Current jaguar information depicts a larger, broader distribution in Arizona. Therefore, it is likely that as our habitat reports become finalized they may provide some assistance to the USFWS during these consultations.

*Has the USFWS established a deadline directing the completion of our habitat mapping exercise?*

No. The deadlines established in the Conservation Agreement were self-imposed as part of the listing-prevention objective. The USFWS has never dictated or requested completion of any JAGCT documents or TASKS.

*Shouldn't we wait for information from Mexico and "ground-truthing" studies to occur before finalizing these mapping exercises?*

As you recall, Objective 5, Tasks 1 and 4, of the Conservation Agreement identify development of habitat suitability criteria and maps for Arizona and New Mexico. Our attempt is to show progress in this effort, and provide information that refines that which is currently available. Waiting will undoubtedly delay the process and force management agencies to continue to rely on information that may be somewhat out-dated. Our exercise demonstrates the best, current information available.

*How does this assist the private landowner?*

Again, the mapping exercise provides a more refined description of jaguar habitat/occurrences in Arizona and may assist private landowners, as well as the USFWS, during Section 7 consultations. The exercise used five criteria in determining and mapping potential habitat, including: 1) vegetation community associations, 2) distance to water, 3) human densities and proximity to agricultural and urban areas, 4) prey densities, and 5) terrain ruggedness.

*At what point does the private landowner become involved in the process?*

Attempts at contacting individual landowners in southeastern Arizona and southwestern New Mexico have not been made, other than to invite these individuals to participate on the Jaguar Conservation Team (JAGCT). Participation on the JAGCT is the most likely way in which private landowners can become involved in the process. The JAGCT began in 1997, and we continue to conduct meetings in the local communities. The meetings remain open to anyone, and our active membership includes many representatives from local communities and

organizations. Our purpose is to provide opportunities and incentives for interested and affected parties to become involved with conservation activities, including: biological information collection; consideration of relevant cultural, economic, and political factors; design and implementation of a comprehensive approach to conservation (including public education); and monitoring, evaluation, and feedback.

As a result of the discussions regarding our mapping exercise, Don Cullum (New Mexico Cattlegrowers) recommended that we identify landowners and an outreach program that may entice their participation in jaguar conservation. One suggestion was to develop and provide signs that could be placed at gates or mailboxes (e.g. *I support Jaguar Conservation, Jaguar Conservation Team participant, This Ranch Supports Jaguar-friendly Conservation Practices during our daily operations*). **Action Item:** Identify land ownership within the mapping exercise and establish block sizes for key conservation areas.

#### ***JAGCT Education Subcommittee Update***

Karen Schedler (AGFD) and Karen Husted (Education and Ranching) updated the Team on the status of the education subcommittee. The unit has been distributed for interdisciplinary review. To date, six reviewers have returned comments. Strengths of the program were noted in the areas of multidisciplinary activities, concepts addressed, and experiential learning opportunities of students. A revised draft of the unit should be available at the January meeting, including assembly of an educational kit/trunk. **Action Item:** Please provide comments regarding the housing/storing of educational kits in the rural communities and the suggested contact person for checking out the kits. Comments should be sent to Karen Schedler via postal mail at 2221 W. Greenway Rd., Phoenix, AZ 85023 or e-mail <[kschedler@gf.state.az.us](mailto:kschedler@gf.state.az.us)>. Comments are due by **August 31** and will be included in the final meeting notes.

It was also announced that JAGCT has received funding from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) to assist in the finalization of the curriculum. We are seeking additional funding, which may also include Mexico educational programs and schools. Don Cullum recommended that a thank you letter be written to the NFWF. **Action Item:** Bill Van Pelt or Terry Johnson (AGFD) will write a "Thank You" letter from the JAGCT to the NFWF for assisting in our efforts.

#### ***Legal Protection of the Jaguar in Arizona and New Mexico***

No new updates. New Mexico legislators are currently reviewing budget related legislation and probably will not convene for other matters until Jan/Feb. Therefore, it is unlikely for any additional recommendations regarding jaguar to be reviewed or submitted until that time.

#### ***End of the Year Report***

Bill Van Pelt mentioned that the annual report on JAGCT activities should be finalized and sent to Albuquerque by the end of August.

#### **E. Mexico Update**

Bill Van Pelt relayed the information from Carlos Lopez. There has been some difficulty in capturing jaguars in leg-hold traps. To date, no jaguars have been captured or fitted with radio collars. Camera studies indicate that the density of jaguars in the study area is approximately 1-1.9 jaguars/100 kilometers. Deer pellet counts indicate prey densities equal to 4-15 deer/km<sup>2</sup>. One female with kittens, one male, and one other family group (unknown count) have been killed in the study area since the last meeting. **Action Item:** Don Cullum will send a report from Raul Valdez to Bill Van Pelt for distribution to JAGCT.

#### ***F. Other Business***

1. Scotty Johnson asked whether INS is ever going to participate in the JAGCT. Bill Van Pelt indicated that INS has been contacted and invited to participate. The INS has requested and received information regarding the JAGCT, but AGFD has not received any comments back. Scotty asked the status of the JAGCT's review of the INS' long-term (e.g., 10-year) plan of projected activities along the border. **Action Item:** Bill Van Pelt check with Lee Benson to confirm that the National Park Service is being included in the reviewing process of the INS' long-term plan.
2. The AGFD has secured funding for a full-time web-master, so the jaguar page should be updated soon. Please keep in mind that the Department has a backlog of information needing placement on their site and it may be a little while before the jaguar page is updated. The jaguar page is one of the most popular visited pages with 20-30 hits/month.

The next JAGCT meeting will be in Douglas, Arizona on January 17, 2002 at 10:00 mountain daylight time.

Meeting was adjourned at 12:30 MDT.

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#### **Attendance Roster**

Steve Pavlik	Sky Island Alliance
Judy Keeler	Bootheel Heritage Assoc.
Karen Kay Husted	Private citizen
Nina King	US Fish and Wildlife Service
Levi Klump	Private citizen
Don Cullum	NM Cattlegrowers Assoc.
Chuck Hayes	New Mexico Dept. of Game & Fish
Gary Helbing	USDA- Coronado National Forest
Ron Bemis	USDA/NRCS
Jack Childs	Jaguar Depredation Subcommittee
Scotty Johnson	Defenders of Wildlife
Tim Snow	Arizona Game & Fish Dept.
Bill Van Pelt	Arizona Game & Fish Dept.
Karen Schedler	Arizona Game & Fish Dept.

Stephen Williams  
Sarah Rinkevich  
Wally Murphy  
Frank Toupal  
Paul Pirtle  
Rudolph Fajardo Jr.  
Charles Jones  
David Bergman  
Brandon Jones  
Matt Colvin

Arizona State Land Dept.  
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service  
USDA Forest Service  
USDA/NRCS  
Private citizen  
USDA/APHIS/Wildlife Services  
USDA/APHIS/Wildlife Services  
USDA/APHIS/Wildlife Services  
USDA/APHIS/Wildlife Services  
Private citizen